

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of connecting at least two users for exchanging video data messages via an internetwork, each user having a respective assigned IP address for said internetwork and a respective assigned telephone identifier number for a public-switched telephone network, said method comprising the steps of:

maintaining in a server coupled to said internetwork a database of registered users, said database including for each registered user a respective telephone identifier number and a respective IP address;

maintaining active connection sessions between said server and each registered user that is available any a particular time;

receiving an access request in said server from a requesting user to establish a data transfer to a desired user on said internetwork, said access request including a target telephone identifier number associated with said desired user;

comparing said target telephone identifier number with said telephone identifier numbers in said database;

if said target telephone identifier number is found in said database, then forwarding an initiation message to said desired user using a respective IP address stored in said database;

said desired user sending an accept message in response to said initiation message if said desired user wishes to exchange video said data messages with said requesting user; and

said server relaying said video data messages between said users, whereby said video data messages are exchanged without said users having direct access to the IP address of each other.

2. (canceled)

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3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (canceled)

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said access request identifies to said server a requesting user who is a registered user, and wherein said initiation message identifies said requesting user to said desired user.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
adding a new registered user to said database in response to a registration request, wherein said registration request includes a respective IP address assigned to said new registered user.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
adding a new registered user to said database in response to a registration request, wherein said registration request includes a respective telephone identifier number assigned to said new registered user.

12. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said access request is initiated by an integrated access device which identifies said target telephone identifier number in response to a call placed to said desired user over said public-switched telephone network.

13. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said server controls a private branch exchange (PBX) connected to said public-switched telephone network, said method further comprising the step of:

said server commanding said PBX to establish a call using said target telephone identifier number.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein said server sends said initiation message after said PBX call is answered.

15. (currently amended) A method of exchanging video data between two individuals over an internetwork simultaneously with exchange of audio data between said two individuals over a telephone network, said method comprising the steps of:

a first individual logging-on to a central server with a first computer coupled to said internetwork so that said central server registers a first IP address and a first telephone number associated with said first individual;

a second individual logging-on to said central server with a second computer coupled to said internetwork so that said central server registers a second IP address and a second telephone number associated with said second individual;

maintaining active connection sessions between said central server and said first and second computers;

initiating a telephone call between said first individual and said second individual, said second individual being a called party of said telephone call;

sending an initiation message from said central server to said second IP address;

sending an approval message from said second individual to said central server;
and

said central server relaying said exchanged video data between said first and second computers, whereby said first and second computers exchange said video data without direct access to the IP address of the other.

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein said telephone call is initiated by said first individual as a calling party using a first telephone, wherein said first computer sends an access request including said second telephone number to said central server in response to said initiation of said telephone call, and wherein said central server selects said second IP address in response to said second telephone number.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said first telephone is coupled to an integrated access device, said integrated access device sending said second telephone number to said first computer.

18. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein said telephone call is initiated in response to an access request received by said central server over said internetwork, wherein said access request identifies said first and second individuals, and wherein said server initiates said telephone call using a public branch exchange (PBX).

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22. (canceled)

23. (canceled)

24. (canceled)

25. (canceled)

26. (currently amended) A method of operating a server system for transfer of caller video data over a computer network, the method comprising:

maintaining active connection sessions between said server system and each registered user that is available any a particular time;

receiving a first message indicating a called telephone number from a public data network wherein a caller is associated with a caller data address and a caller telephone number, wherein a called party is associated with a called party data address and the called telephone number, and wherein the called telephone number is contemporaneously used to establish a telephone call between the caller and the called party over a public telephone network;

processing the called telephone number from the first message to determine if the called party is a registered user with an active connection session and if the called party will receive caller video data;

if the called party will receive the caller video data, transferring a second message to the public data network for delivery to the called party wherein the second message indicates that the caller video data will be transferred to the called party, and transferring a third message to the public data network for delivery to the caller wherein the third message indicates that the caller video data will be delivered to the called party;

receiving the caller video data from the called party at the server system via the public data network;

addressing the caller video data to the called party data address; and

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transferring the caller video data from the server system to the public data network for delivery to the called party.

27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) A method of operating a server system for video telephony, the method comprising:

maintaining a database of user telephone numbers and associated user data addresses;

maintaining ~~individual indications if individual ones of the~~ active connection sessions with users who are available to receive video data; and

establishing video data exchanges between callers and called parties over a public data network in response to messages indicating called telephone numbers contemporaneously used to establish telephone calls between the callers and the called parties over a public telephone network;

wherein establishing the video data exchanges comprises receiving the video data from the public data network into the server system, addressing the video data from the callers to the called parties, addressing the video data from the called parties to the callers, and transferring the video data from the server system to the public data network for delivery to the callers and called parties based on the addressing.

29. (canceled)